

RALEIGH TRANSIT AUTHORITY
JANUARY 10, 2019
MINUTES

The Raleigh Transit Authority met on Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 3:30 p.m in the Council Chamber, Raleigh Municipal Building, 222 W. Hargett Street, with the following present:

Jason Horne, presiding
Danny Coleman
Sherita McCullers
Tolulupe Omokaiye
Tony Pecoraro
Karen Rindge
Nathan Spencer
Michael Stevenson
Linda Wire

Staff present: David Eatman, David Walker, Marie Parker

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Horne.

The following items were discussed with actions taken as shown:

AGENDA – APPROVED

Chairman Horne asked if there were any changes to the agenda. No changes were requested. Without objection, the agenda was approved.

INFORMATION ITEMS

FY 2019 ROUTE CHANGES – UPDATE RECEIVED

Mr. Eatman reported the new route changes started on the previous Sunday and staff was excited about the West and Southeast services. Southeast services on Poole Road, Barwell Road and Rock Quarry Road have been the biggest service requests for ears. The only issue is all infrastructure is not in place but was felt that is not a reason to provision of services to the area. Staff desires to get these routes established. The City Council the previous Tuesday approved the design of infrastructure on the Rock Quarry side of Poole Road as there is a lack of curb and gutter in that

area that makes installing amenities more challenging. . There are temporary upgrades in place until this is accomplished. There are standard amenities we would like to have there for safety and involves a very extensive longer term project once curb and gutter is installed. Ms. Rindge asked if all of those projects are funded through the transit plan and the City with Mr. Eatman responding yes noting rock Quarry, Barwell and Poole Roads are funded bond projects as well as other sidewalk components. There are 15 sites under construction currently and do not have shelters on them now. There are 15 others coming up for construction in the spring and 70 more sites are part of existing roadway projects. Transit does not have to pay for those improvements since those small incremental projects are included in the larger projects. He noted design, encroachment and right-of-way takes the longest time. Staff is trying to also continue the smaller lots of projects. Mr. Eatman referred to the western route changes noting there has been a lot of interest in services near the Museum of Art. Easements have been secured and shelters could be under construction very soon and should be up and running in a couple of months. We try to get the shelter on the pad as soon as the concrete is cured enough to drill. Mr. Eatman explained the meaning of “temporary pads” which meet the requirements of NCDOT but would be removed or altered upon development of curbs, gutters and sidewalks for major roadways.

Mr. Eatman thanked everyone for getting these services out which were one of the largest deployments of service he has seen in his career. This would equal the last 10 year effort in this one deployment.

Ms. Rindge agreed this is what voters voted for and is probably the most exciting thing we have seen since the vote in 2015. This provides service to people who need it and will be reaching more places, schools, the Art Museum, etc. She noted there are going to be bumps but this is really an exciting time for the City and Wake County. There are more good things to come with the Wake Transit Plan and this is tax dollars at work. Discussion took place regarding issues with drivers as a result of the route changes. Mr. Eatman indicated this involves a lot of changes and the computers that make things work requires a lot of work to get everything in place. The first step forward has been made by putting the services on the street and there are more improvements management is continuing to make. Ms. Parker is working on how things might be done in the future and the intent is to continue to improve. Chairman Horne expressed interest in the authority following up on the progress. Mr. Spencer reported the Route Committee learned about how the driver problems came about from Ms. Parker’s team and understood more about and why it involves difficulties in adjusting and had the opportunity to reinforce their needs to be some quick resolution. Drivers get to pick their runs in May. Mr. Eatman indicated January, September and May are the dates mandated in the contract to choose runs. January runs have been chosen.

Ms. Wire stated she did get out and drive the 2 main route changes and was impressed with how smoothly things were running after only the second day. Ms. Omokaiye rode Route 18 the

previous day and was a full route and has been full every time she has ridden it. Ms. Rindge stated the Museum of Art is trying to promote this change.

Ms. Parker indicated the software vendor will be here Tuesday to work on the run issues brought up by the drivers.

Chairman Horne indicated this is an exciting time and progress can be seen.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ROUTE COMMITTEE – REPORT RECEIVED – AD HOC COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED

Mr. Spencer reported the Route Committee had a lengthy meeting on January 9. Discussions at the meeting related to the Downtown Transportation Plan that Ms. Vega will cover and discussed two points relating to driver issues brought up at the last authority meeting. The first was how did the system break down in terms of providing new run sets and what can be learned from that. The second was overall discussion on how to improve the process and start monitoring this new implementation. They discussed the relationship of Transdev and drivers and what Transdev is doing regarding run sets. Mr. Spencer noted he learned that RTA only 1 year before voted to buy software they are working on to do the run sets. The software was behind schedule when they started learning it. He reviewed the function of the software and explained the problems that have occurred. Mr. Spencer stated the labor piece is not in the authority's purview. The Route Committee explained to labor representatives at the meeting that their issues are understood and need to be fixed and wanted to see a near term solution. He explained no one will get everything they want but asked Transdev to come to the table and get this worked out. He stated it must be kept in mind that as the system grows, the drivers of the life blood and their concerns have to be considered. Discussion followed regarding the need for additional drivers. Ms. Parker explained they are constantly recruiting but are not receiving as many applications as before. They are trying internal referrals, constantly running ads, open houses and orientations, etc. There are currently 208 employed and there are 17 unfilled slots. Mr. Spencer explained we are competing with other agencies for drivers as they also expand.

Chairman Horne stated getting new software rolled out and the huge service expansion is very challenging. Now that the extended service has gone live we will learn more about routes and software and things should smooth out. In response to questioning from Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Eatman reviewed the variety of issues that have been brought forward from drivers. Some of the problem is getting used to the new runs which involves the most significant changes in well over a decade. Even if everything runs correctly, this would still be a huge adjustment.

In response to a question from Mr. Coleman, Mr. Spencer indicated Transdev and the City own the software. Chairman Horne stated the vendor needs to be held responsible. Lengthy discussion followed regarding the issues with the software with Mr. Eatman noting there is light at the end of the tunnel but we need to learn, progress and move beyond it. Mr. Spencer explained Transdev understands this is a key issue the authority is paying attention to and we are concerned about it. The authority cannot negotiate but definitely can oversee the contract. It was made clear at the committee meeting that the authority wants to see them move forward, make improvements and be transparent with the drivers and encourage them to find solutions faster. Ms. Omokaiye suggested setting a timeline for the improvements. Mr. Spencer indicated it was hard to nail down a timeline at the committee meeting as there are a variety of factors involved.

In response to a question from Mr. Coleman, Mr. Eatman noted Remix will be coming to help with the software the following Tuesday. Chairman Horne stated he would think as we work through some of these things and as it calms down, we will be able to get more concrete information on resolution of the issues.

HEARING

Blair Brown, 224 E. Vance Street, indicates he has been a driver for 16 years and as a result had gotten enough seniority to have weekends off. With the new runs he is now back where he started – working on weekends. Many drivers have slipped back even further. His wife is concerned about him having to work on the weekends. He hopes in a couple of weeks to go back to his seniority. He indicated their seniority is all they have.

Octavia Rainey complained about the lack of heat at Moore Square and felt it might as well be shut down. She stated bus drivers do not work for the City but work for another company noting many citizens think they are City employees. She felt the contract needs further explanation. She asked for any public record indicating there would be no heat at Moore Square. She urged more communication. Mr. Eatman stated Moore Square is not enclosed but there is radiant floor heat in the cubicles which is an improvement over before.

In response to questioning from Chairman Horne, Mr. Eatman explained under the NC General Statutes, municipalities cannot bargain with unions and Transdev represents our interest with the Union and its employees. Part of the mass transit act states even though the State may not recognize unions, that area must honor unions with the availability of a third party which is Transdev. The Union has been here since the trolley days and when federal funds were brought to the cities, unions could not be removed if federal funds are provided. The drivers are employed by Transdev. Mr. Coleman asked if there are performance audits on Transdev. Mr. Eatman indicated we are subjected to audits all the time and reviewed the various audits including safety, performance, etc. Mr. Coleman stated seniority is a perk for drivers and are incentives to do better.

He asked if seniority is a perk, are we now moving in a direction to go away from that. Mr. Eatman stated seniority varies from property to property and generally it is all the same and is a collective bargaining agreement. Chairman Horne stated the authority cannot have influence in that area since it is against State law. Ms. Parker stated the collective agreement does recognize seniority. The software does not recognize that but creates a list of 184 schedules and the first person in seniority picks from that list.

Dwight Spencer, 205 Fayetteville Street, Suite 220, indicated he is an advocate for buses. When taxpayers invested money into Moore Square, the facility should have been enclosed. He felt if this transit hub was in North Raleigh or West Raleigh the doors at the restrooms would be closed and it is not fair the doors are open. 85% of the people keeping this transit system moving are African American and 90% of the employees of GoRaleigh are African American. He referred to Route 17 which is a very dangerous road (Rock Quarry Road) and narrow resulting the bus driver having to focus on driving and there is a sign standing up that is not lit. At the Route meeting yesterday, he was very shocked to learn Transdev has been the vendor 14 years and Transdev does not say anything and should provide a report about the issues. He felt Mr. Eatman should resign his position with the City as he is representing Transdev under cover. He stated it is quite obvious this company that has many lawsuits pending doesn't care about their employees. If GoRaleigh intends to be a role model for regional mass transit, they need to do better now.

Travis Hodge, Smithfield, NC, indicated he is has been a mechanic for 16 years. He expressed concern about the training of mechanics noting there are new buses and they have only had some inhouse training. He was told not to bring the new buses into the shop; however, the Maintenance Director tells him in a meeting they can be brought in if both doors are open and the exhaust fan is on.. He asked the Union to question this resulting in the Fire Marshall coming in. He is now being told they can pull buses into the lift bay but have to leave the doors open and turn the exhaust fan on. He expressed concern that now there are new routes and it is a real struggle to find the buses noting they should have GPS on them. He expressed concern regarding the lack of training, needed parts, etc.

Terence Dewberry indicated drivers have listened to excuses about why the runs are not accurate and it is time for Transdev to take responsibility for their actions. He stressed this authority is obligated to oversee the management. Many of the exhaust fans do not work. This facility is a multi million dollar building and the building and grounds are not maintained. A lot of money is paid to Transdev to take care of the building, grounds and buses which is not happening. Parts are not available and they are expecting an investigation into the maintenance of this property.

Ricky Scott, 401 Ferris Drive, Chair of the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, indicated this is his first meeting of the Transit Authority he has attended. He expressed the

Committee's desire to continue to work with the Transit Authority regarding the routes and accessibility to all people. He hoped the issues being brought forward today are resolved.

Ms. Omokaiye referred to Moore Square and stated the authority has been working on that project for some time. She stated last night was cold and felt it was an oversight putting heaters outside and noted we are all accountable. She stated she did not hear anyone blaming the drivers. She noted there is a driver representative on this authority and was bothered that the authority is just hearing these issues. The authority has been working on the new routes for some time and none of this came up until the launch of the new routes. Ms. McCullers replied that is because they have been talking to management. She noted it was alluded to that the Moore Square bathroom doors were open because the people using it were black and stressed that is not the case --- they are open for the safety of the people there. Ms. Omokaiye stated it is not like the union doesn't have a voice stating they have a voice on the authority. She asked why are these concerns getting to the point that a press conference is held. There are glitches that have to be worked out and we all have to hold our own accountability. She stated the runs should have come out sooner to the drivers. She stressed this is something the authority has been talking about for some time. The authority members has to be accountable up front. Decisions have already been made and now the drivers are coming forward and are mad. She stated everyone knows where this fell short and did not want the union to think no one has been heard. She realized there is tension and the authority could have faced them if they knew it would be this big issue. Everyone is accountable and must work with each other and everyone is playing part in getting here. It is now necessary to come to the table to make this better because we are already here now. Ms. Omokaiye stated she would like to see more drivers than are present at this meeting come to the Route Committee meeting. She stressed the need for everyone to come together and should not blame each other. She further suggested creating an ad hoc committee to address the issue of runs. Ms. Rindge indicated she was contacted by Mr. Dewberry on December 28, 2018. She indicated several things have been brought up today and felt the authority needs to address this.

Ms. Omokaiye moved that an ad hoc committee be created so everyone can come to the table to talk about runs and Transdev and what power the authority has over Transdev. Her motion was seconded by Mr. Coleman. Mr. Stevenson stated there are limitations to how the authority can oversee or intervene on how Transdev operates with the union. Mr. Eatman stated the authority cannot get into direct management. Goals and objectives can be developed and how policy for the system is set but from a technical standpoint, Transdev is the employer of the employees. Mr. Stevenson stated he agreed with comments made by Ms. Omokaiye and a lot of the issue relates to communication and monitoring performance. The question is how can that communication and monitoring performance be improved. Mr. Stevenson indicated the authority does renew the contract and needs a way to monitor performance of Transdev so there is a basis for making informed decisions.

A vote on the motion to create an ad hoc committee to review the issues raised today was taken and unanimously passed. Chairman Horne ruled the motion adopted.

RALEIGH DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION REVIEW:

Ms. Vega was present to provide an overview of the alternatives resulting from the Downtown Transportation Committee. Mr. Eatman explained the plan will determine how BRT will progress through Downtown. There are things that have to be mitigated but this is looking at all modes of travel.

The scope, purpose of the plan and timeline were reviewed by Ms. Vega. An overview of the 4 scenarios that have been developed and key themes of each were discussed. Ms. Vega indicated there are several committees working on this plan and stakeholders are included. There has been a public meeting with 100 in attendance as well as live and on-line surveys. All scenarios were explained using a chart available at the meeting. Scenario A was reviewed with coverage in west and east Downtown and connects to Union Station and GoRaleigh Station. Green lines depicted bike lanes. Scenario B shifts to the east side of Downtown with access to GoRaleigh Station and not Union Station. Scenario C is in the Downtown center but does not connect to GoRaleigh or Union Station. Scenario D is a combination of Scenarios B and C and puts them together and connects to GoRaleigh Station. A circulator would be required to get to Union Station with this scenario. Ms. Vega stated the Technical Committee will be meeting again at the end of January. Chairman Horne is a member of the Downtown Transportation Committee and asked members of the Authority to voice their choice of scenarios. In response to questions, Mr. Eatman indicated Scenario A connects to both GoRaleigh and Union Station. In response to a question from Ms. Omokaiye, Ms. Vega explained the impacts of the various scenarios are available in the report. Scenario A is the only scenario that reduces a lane of traffic in either direction. All other scenarios may reduce a lane of traffic in a single direction.

After reviewing the scenarios, Mr. Coleman expressed his preference of Scenario C. Mr. Stevenson agreed that Scenario C is the most efficient regarding moving buses. Lengthy discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of the scenarios. Ms. Vega stated the committee has not gotten to the level of design details at this point. Mr. Coleman expressed concern that Scenario A involves a tunnel under West Street.

Mr. Stevenson indicated rapidity is important and level of service and speed are the most important consideration and that should remain on people's minds.

Following discussion on the scenarios, Mr. Stevenson indicated he is in favor of Scenario C, Ms. Wire is in favor of Scenario C, Mr. Coleman is in favor of Scenario C. Mr. Pecoraro indicated it is difficult to decide on a favored scenario when the costs are not known.

Mr. Spencer indicated one factor to consider is Downtown mobility will change and BRT will not be the only mode of travel. He hoped we don't have a lot of stations Downtown for BRT and that it will be simple to get from Downtown Knightdale to Downtown Raleigh to Cary and would like to see speed and efficiency viewed highly. Mr. Spencer indicated he favors Scenario C. Chairman Horne asked others to let him know their choice of scenarios in order for him to report it to the committee. Mr. Coleman indicated trying to make a decision without all the variables is difficult and all variables are needed before the authority is asked for their decisions. He indicated he was going to ask if he is to make a recommendation on anything in the future that he will need all the facts. He indicated people in East Raleigh haven't had an opportunity one invitation to the NBATF and he was offended by that. He felt people who want to know something need to have an avenue to know. Mr. Eatman stated there has been much outreach for this plan and if there was no meeting for NBATF he apologized. He stated staff was "looking for you and didn't find you". He reiterated a lengthy process has taken place with the transit plan. Mr. Coleman requested a copy of the MIS.

STAFF REPORT – APPROVED

Members received in their agenda packets the following staff reports:

1. Statement of Income (November 2018)
2. Variance Analysis (November 2018)
3. Go PASS Ridership Summary (November 2018)
4. Go PASS Ridership by Agency (November 2018)
5. Accessible Raleigh Transportation Summary (November 2018)
6. Operating Statistics (November 2018)
7. Route Statistics (November 2018)
8. Ridership Percentage by Time Period (November 2018)
9. Evaluation by Route (November 2018)
10. On time Performance Report (November 2018)
11. Monthly Talking Points (January 2019)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Hunt

